Ere thou ſhalt loſe for me one drop of bloud.
Anth. I am a tainted Weather of the flocke,
Meeteſt for death, the weakeſt kinde of fruit
Drops earlieſt to the ground, and ſo let me;
You cannot better be imploy'd, *Baſſanio*,
Then to live ſtill and write mine Epitaph?

Enter Nerriſſa.

Duke. Came you from *Padua* from *Bellario*?
Ner. From both: my L. *Bellario* greets your Grace.
Baſſ. Why doſt thou whet thy knife ſo earneſtly?
Iew. To cut the forfeiture from that Bankrout there.
Grat. Not on thy ſoule: but on thy ſoule harſh Jew,
Thou mak'ſt thy knife keene: but no mettle can,
No, not the hangmans axe beare halfe the keennеſſe
Of thy ſharp envie: can no prayers pearce thee?
Iew. No, none that thou haſt wit enough to make.
Grat. O be thou damn'd, inexecrable dog,
And for thy life let juſtice be accuſd;
Thou almoſt mak'ſt me waver in my faith,
To hold opinion with *Pythagoras*,
That ſoules of Animals infuſe themſelves
Into the trunks of men: Thy curriſh ſpirit
Govern'd a Woolfe, who hang'd for humane ſlaughter,
Even from the gallowes did his fell ſoule fleet,
And whileſt thou layeſt in thy unhallowed damme;
Infuſd it ſelfe in thee: for thy deſires
Are woolviſh, bloudy, ſtarv'd, and ravenous.
Iew. Till thou canſt raile the ſeale from off my Bond,
Thou but offendſt thy lungs to ſpeake ſo loud:
Repaire thy wit good youth, or it will fall
To cureleſſe ruine. I ſtand for Law.
Duke. This letter from *Bellario* doth commend
A young and learned Doctor to our Court:
Where is he?
Ner. He attendeth here hard by,
To know your anſwer whether youle admit him.
Duke. With all my heart: ſome three or foure of you

Go give him curteous conduct to this place,
Meane time the Court ſhall heare *Bellario's* Letter.

Your Grace ſhall underſtand, that at the receit of your Letter, I am very ſicke, but in the inſtant that your meſſenger came, in loving viſitation was with me a yong Doctor of *Rome*, his name is *Balthaſar*: I acquainted him with the cauſe in controverſie between the *Iew* and *Anthonio* the Merchant; we turned ore many books together, he is furniſhed with my opinion, which bettered with his own learning, the greatneſſe whereof I cannot enough commend, comes with him at my importunity, to fill up your Graces requeſt in my ſtead. I beſeech you let his lack of yeares be no impediment to let him lack a reverend eſtimation, for I never knew ſo young a body with ſo old a head: I leave him to your Gracious acceptance, whoſe tryall ſhall better publiſh his commendation.

Enter Portia for Balthazar.

Duke. You heare the learn'd *Bellario* what he writes,
And here I take it is the Doctor come.
Give me your hand, come you from old *Bellario*?
Por. I did my Lord.
Duke. You are welcome, take your place:
Are you acquinted with the difference,
That holds this preſent queſtion in the Court?
Por. I am enformed throughly of the cauſe,
Which is the Merchant here? and which the Iew?
Duke. *Anthonio*, and old *Shylocke*, both ſtand forth.
Por. Is your name *Shylocke*?
Iew. *Shylocke* is my name.
Por. Of a ſtrange nature is the ſute you follow,
Yet in ſuch rule, that the *Venetian* Law
Cannot impugne you as you do proceed.
You ſtand within his danger, do you not?
Ant. I, ſo he ſayes.
Por. Do you confeſſe the Bond?
An. I do.
Por. Then muſt the Jew be mercifull.
Shy. On what compulſion muſt I, tell me that?